THE OMBUDSMAN'S REVIEW
JUNE 2003

2002/03 was quite a full year, fraught with activities. It was our first full year since delinking from Government systems and practices. We moved into our own premises. We recorded 14,298 enquiries received, 4,382 complaints lodged, 4,370 cases concluded and six direct investigations completed : all of them the highest during my term of office.

The heavier caseload put extra pressure on our Office, particularly as many of my investigators were new entrants to replace civil servants previously on loan from Government. Even so, with the diligence of my staff and flexible deployment of temporary case officers, we managed to register the proud record above.

Meanwhile, there were other pressures. On the one hand, some persistent complainants not satisfied with our findings unless all their allegations were substantiated would at times direct their dissatisfaction towards my Office or my staff. On the other hand, a few resistant organisations sensitive to our inquiries would argue against our intervention. Let me assure all that we set out to see justice done. We analyse facts with impartiality; we operate without fear or favour, bias or prejudice. This is our guiding principle and the essence of our professionalism.

To make for a proper perception of our role and responsibilities, we will step up efforts in public information for our community and enhance promotion of a positive complaint management culture among public administrators.

On the other hand, I have been encouraged that some organisations in the course of our inquiry initiate their own review and introduce remedial measures. This underlines the catalytic influence of our Office in administrative reform.

Looking ahead, I envisage difficult days. Government's financial stringencies have resulted in reduced funding for the Office over the next few years. I must, therefore, be ever more prudent with resources. We will continue to streamline procedures and redistribute duties to ensure that financial constraints will not affect our long term development.

Whatever the odds, we will do our level best to contribute to fair and open, responsive and responsible public administration. We are committed to improving the quality and standard of services in the public sector.